

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
Project HIRE success story
Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation 2010

I started at Bellevue Community College in 2002 and transferred to the University of Washington in 2007. Due to my disability it took me seven years to obtain my bachelor's degree in Political Science. I was contacted by the Project HIRE team in my last quarter at the UW. When I started in the program, I had little professional experience and did not have clear career goals.

The Project H.I.R.E. team helped me to develop a job search plan and supported me in my efforts to find a job. While in the program, I attended numerous job search workshops including a great field trip to meet with agency recruiters at the State Department of Personnel office in Olympia. The team assisted me in writing a professional looking resume and cover letters. They were my support team and regularly sent me jobs leads, and gave me tips on networking, building a LinkedIn profile and assisted me in the daunting task of applying for state and federal jobs.

After applying for several jobs without success the team determined that I needed some practical experience in order to be marketable. They were instrumental in my obtaining an internship at Senator Maria Cantwell's office. While working in Senator Cantwell's office I gained valuable office and customer service skills as I interacted with constituents, researched private and federal agencies and managed casework for constituents' in the areas of housing and banking. It was a great experience.

Upon completing my internship, I decided that I definitely wanted to work directly with people. The team helped me add my new work experience to my resume and sent my resume and Schedule A letter to numerous Federal Agencies. I was called in for an interview for a job that I had not applied for under the Schedule A hiring authority. A few days later, I was offered a job with a federal agency with a starting salary of over \$44,000 which is an amazing starting salary for a recent Political Science graduate. When I was offered the job, the Human Resources manager commented that my customer service experience and references from Maria Cantwell's office were key components to my job offer. I truly believe that I would not have been offered this amazing job with the federal government if it were not for the efforts and support of the Bellevue College Project HIRE team. I hope they continue this great program.

Bellevue College Project H.I.R.E. participant